

Contact: Mark Forrest
Tel: 01236 616239
Fax: 01236 616206
E-mail: Forrestm@northlan.gov.uk
Date: 27th February 2006
Our Ref: D/PL/01/08
Your Ref:

Rena Tarwinska
Scottish Lowlands Forest District
Bankhead Steadings
Braxfield Road
LANARK
ML11 9BU

Planning & Environment

David M Porch, Director
Fleming House
2 Tryst Road
Cumbernauld
G67 1JW
www.northlan.gov.uk

Dear Rena,

Carron Valley Forest: Mountain Bike Trails.

I refer to the meeting held on 14th February 2006 between yourself, Mark Forrest of North Lanarkshire Council and Robert Hunter of Stirling Council and your subsequent letter of 17th February 2006 which outlined Forestry Commission Scotland's position regarding future funding and project works to develop mountain bike trails and other facilities at the Carron Valley Forest.

I note the reasons given for FCS being unable to invest in anything other than a general care and maintenance basis at the site. This is disappointing as North Lanarkshire Council had hoped that the development of mountain bike trails and associated facilities and the upgrading of car parking, signage and interpretation, would form part of a suite of activity based locations within the North Lanarkshire area both to promote active recreation and to attract associated tourism-based economic benefits.

My reasons for writing is to clarify FCS position regarding investment and development at the site by other parties. As Mark Forrest of the Environmental Projects Team had previously indicated, the Department of Planning and Environment have provisionally allocated a sum of funding during 2006/7, (up to £12,000), to build upon the existing trails which have been developed over the last eighteen months. This was allocated however largely on the basis of partner contributions from FCS, Stirling Council, from any sources of funding which could be secured by the Carron Valley Development Group, and on the understanding that a repair and maintenance schedule implemented by FCS would be in place on site.

It is my understanding that the Carron Valley Development Group have now made contact with Scottish Water and had had initial discussions to develop a multi-use trail, including spur sections, along part of the southern shore of the Carron Valley Reservoir. This trail, (or a similar trail within the forest), would be developed by the same mechanism as the existing trail i.e. CVDG would draft, tender and let the contract and would project-manage the works. Clearly, given your letter of 17th February 2006 there are issues on which we would require clarification.

These are as follows:

1. Would Scottish Lowlands Forest District be in a position to, and agreeable to, allowing further works to take place?
2. Would SLFD be able to absorb the VAT element of any works which might take place?
3. Can SLFD confirm what sort of maintenance regime would be in place for the existing sections of trail and would SFLD be able to discuss a maintenance programme for new trails on Scottish Water property?

4. Can SLFD confirm their position regarding any commercial interests approaching them to operate mountain bike related facilities at the site?
5. Would SLFD be willing to consider commercial sponsorship for the purposes of trail or car park maintenance?

I would therefore be grateful if you could confirm the position regarding the five issues raised above.

As you will be aware, anecdotal evidence suggests that the trails are already being regularly used by mountain bike enthusiasts. North Lanarkshire Council would be keen to see positive publicity for the existing trail features and for the work carried out by the Carron Valley Development Group. I would request that you advise of how publicity for the trails will be delivered and when any photo shoot or other form of publicity launch may be scheduled.

Finally, it is my understanding that, as previously agreed, you will invoice North Lanarkshire Council for its contribution to the purchase of bike counters within the site. I would request that you do this at the earliest available opportunity.

Thank you for any update you may be able to provide.

Yours sincerely

David M Porch
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT

Cc: Robert Hunter, Stirling Council Headquarters, Viewforth, Stirling FK8 1JJ.
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